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Society and Politics in Ancient Rome. By FRANK FROST ABBOTT.
New York: Scribner. 1909. Pp. viii+268.

It is a long span from Pompeii to these latter days, from the time of the Roman oligarchy to our own everyday politics of the Senate Chamber and the White House. And yet such is the scope of Mr. Abbott's new book. The general theme is, as the title indicates, the social and political conditions in ancient Rome. The subjects of the several essays are, however, treated quite independently one of another.

The papers are introduced to us as essays and sketches, and such they really are. The book is not simply so much interesting information, but it is that plus the author. It is *his* interpretation of men and movements. In this the author's scholarship is so thoroughgoing that he can be relied upon not only for an accurate interpretation of the larger movements, but also for an interpretation of those smaller items, the significance of which to one less informed would remain riddles.

Perhaps I might speak of the volume as scholarship humanized, so warm and life-giving is the author's presentation of the subject-matter. For instance, the very name of Pompeii carries with it an air of unreality and mystery, of beings not quite human, buried long years ago under a flood of lava, giving us a lurking feeling that perhaps like Sodom and Gomorrah of old the destruction was Heaven-wrought. But upon reading Mr. Abbott's chapter on "Municipal Politics in Pompeii" all this atmosphere of unreality is dispelled, and we feel that the ancient Pompeians were men of like passions with ourselves. Again, in the chapter on "Some Spurious Inscriptions and Their Authors," the same skill in vitalization is seen. Such is the choice of inscriptions and the presentation of the matter in this chapter that, though it is perhaps the most technical of the papers, at all events the farthest removed from popular interest, yet after reading it epigraphists as a class do not seem so alien to things human, yielding as they do to temptations, temptations upon which, however, it would be safe to say they have a monopoly.

Another striking characteristic of the book is the author's ability to sketch with a few very significant strokes a whole period of history. In this he seems to me a very Whistler. One of many illustrations of this is to be found in "The Story of Two Oligarchies," a chapter of surpassing interest not only to those specially interested in the struggle between the Roman Senate and the military leaders of the last days of the Republic, but also to those who follow the trend of everyday politics—the struggle that is going on before our own very eyes between the United States Senate and the President.

In reading the volume one cannot but be impressed with the "modernism" of antiquity, with the sameness of human nature in all its essentials throughout all periods of history; and with the similar characteristics of the problems, social and political, of the ancient world and our own. In the chapter to which reference has just been made, the striking similarity between the governmental sys-

terms of Rome and the United States is pointed out; also the play of one party against another in the political arena then just as today. In another chapter, "Women and Public Affairs under the Roman Republic," we discover that the suffragette is no modern invention, and many there are who will take great pride in the antiquity of their cause, more still, I imagine who will find consolation in the fact that the good old Romans had similar troubles. One line of Cato tells a sad, sad story: "As soon as they [the women] have begun to be your equals, they will be your superiors." The author seems to agree in a way with Cato, for we read: "One woman, Cornelia, set the revolution in motion; another, Clodia, brought the movement to a climax." Note, too, the similar characteristics of college students of those days and those of Princeton and Yale today. In speaking of Cicero's son—the subject of the chapter entitled "The Career of a Roman Student"—Mr. Abbott says "the escapades of the young Roman student, his promises of reform, and his pleas for more money, present in outline the true predecessor of the student of today." The chapter is a record of the vicissitudes of an overly anxious father in his efforts to make a student out of this typical young sprig of antiquity. There is a letter there, too, which, I'm sure, will cause all men of academic affiliations to send a throb of sympathy across the centuries to one of their number long since a shade.

In the chapters "Petronius: A Study in Ancient Realism" and "A Roman Puritan," the author has rescued from obscurity Epicurean and Stoic alike. The chapter on Petronius will be of special interest to students of literature. It contains a keen analysis of the ancient and modern novel, and claims for the latter a Roman origin. "A Roman Puritan" is illuminative of a certain type of character strikingly similar, according to the author, to the New England Puritan.

Unless this review is to be published palimpsest fashion I shall have to content myself with the mere titles of the remaining chapters. They deal with "Roman Women in the Trades and Professions," "The Theatre as a Factor in Roman Politics under the Republic," "Petrarch's Letters to Cicero," "Literature and the Common People of Rome," and "The Evolution of the Modern Forms of the Letters of Our Alphabet." In the last chapter mentioned and the concluding one of the series Mr. Abbott applies biological principles to the evolution of the alphabet. The process is an especially interesting one, with wholly satisfactory results. The alphabet, as we have it, is shown to be the result of the working of the scientific law of the variation of species from an original type, and the survival of the fittest of the resultant variations.

The essays and sketches are delightful reading, reminding one of Lamb in their easy-flowing English style. One might suppose they were written for pleasure pure and simple. It is a volume for the general reader and the specialist. Frequent footnotes give the authority upon which conclusions are based. An index, too, is added—a convenience so often omitted in a work of this sort. I know of no book, except perhaps Ferrero's history (which lacks the conciseness of Mr. Abbott's work), in which one may find so clear a comparison or contrast

between the problems of the ancient world and those of today. To me and to many other old students of Mr. Abbott the book has a very special personal interest.

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The Athenian Family. A Sociological and Legal Study Based Chiefly on the Works of the Attic Orators. By CHARLES ALBERT SAVAGE. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Dissertation, 1907. Pp. xiii + 137.

The larger portion of this book, pp. 46-133, is given to an exposition of the Athenian laws regulating marriage, the relations of parents and children, adoption, and inheritance. More general matter, illustrative of the point of view upon which these laws were based, is contained in the introductory chapters, which deal with the influence upon the family of the religious feeling requiring the proper observance of funeral rites, with the attitude of the state toward the family, and with the position of Athenian women.

For a dissertation the subject, as the preface (p. xiii) truly remarks, is "wide in its scope and somewhat general in its character." We cannot, therefore, expect of the writer a solution of any of the complex problems to be found in Athenian marriage and inheritance laws, but should be satisfied to have the material well arranged, and the facts stated with accuracy and clearness. On doubtful points a conservative position is taken, the views expressed by Wyse in *The Speeches of Isaeus* being generally followed.

A few slight inaccuracies may be noted. The fact that Demosthenes' father willed his wife to his nephew should not be cited (p. 48) as an example of the marriage of aunt and nephew, since it is not a case of blood-relationship. The same will is cited (p. 51) to prove that the marriageable age for women was sometimes as low as ten years, a dangerous inference from τὴν δ' ἀδελφὴν δταν ἡλικίαν ἔχῃ, τοῦτο δ' ἐμέλλεν εἰς ἔτος δέκατον γενήσεσθαι (Dem. 29. 43). The Greek is a better support for the more probable limit of fourteen years, since the girl was five years old when her father died. It is somewhat incorrect to say (p. 46) that every Athenian was forbidden by law to marry a foreigner "under pain of the severest penalties," when the severest penalty is inflicted not upon the citizen but upon the foreigner ([Dem.] 59. 16). Should a proof of the "legal incapacity of Athenian women" be found in the law which set aside the will of a man who was "under the influence of a woman" ("and especially such a woman" [Dem.] 48. 56)?

Mr. Savage is easily shocked. He finds it "astonishing" and "amazing" that Socrates should hold a conversation with Theodota and Plato advocate communal marriage. One wonders, too, at times whether he is entirely ignorant of the prevalence of the marriage of convenience in many countries at the present day.

A. G. L.